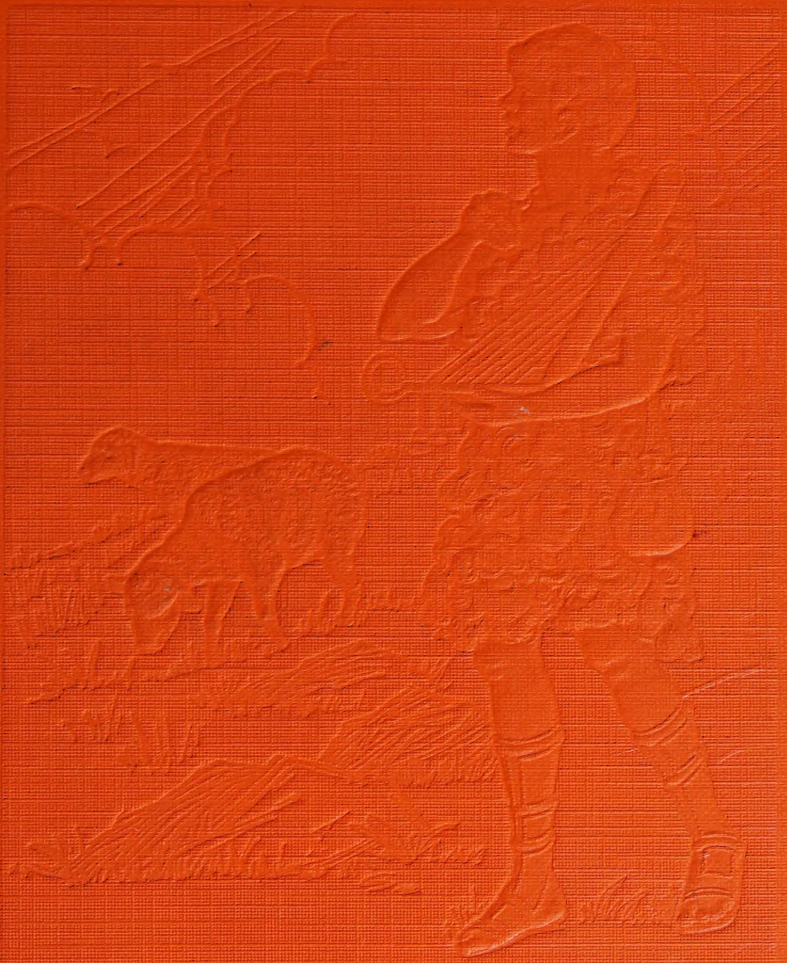


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HERO TALES of the BIBLE



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BIBLE



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HERO TALES OF THE BIBLE

A. W. SPALDING

Author of

"LITTLE BIBLE BOYS," "A MAN OF VALOR,"

"HILLS o' CA'LINY," ETC.

*"For youth is a noble seed, that springs
Into the flower of heroes and kings!"*

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The old man came up to Rebekah, and said, "Let me, I pray you, drink a little water out of your pitcher."

The Girl Who Watered the Camels

HERE was a little girl in Bible times who lived in the city of Haran, on the wide plains beyond the river. And her name was Rebekah. She had a father named Bethuel and a brother named Laban.

Now they all kept sheep in that country, and cattle, and asses, and camels. Some of the men had a great many sheep and camels and asses and cattle, and they kept many servants to tend them. But Bethuel had only a few, so he and his son Laban could care for them all alone. They watched them out in the fields while they fed, and they gathered them into the fold at night so that the wolves and the lions could not get them, and they brought them up to the wells at noon to water them.

Rebekah helped her mother in the house, and sometimes she helped her father out of doors. She learned to sweep and keep house, and she learned to sew and make clothes, and she learned to wash the dishes and to cook; and one thing besides she had to do, and that was to carry water.

The wells where all the people got their water were outside the city walls, and there the women would go with their water jars and pitchers to get water for their houses; and there, too, the sheep and the camels and the cattle all came up to be watered. And even when Rebekah was very little, she learned to go with her mother to the well, carrying her water

pitcher on her shoulder, and draw up the water from the well and carry it home. And sometimes, when her father or her brother were there at the well with the sheep, she helped them draw water and pour it into the trough for the sheep to drink. So she learned not only to help her mother, but her father and other people as well, and to be very happy in doing it.

And many a time, as the girl Rebekah came out to the well to draw water, in the sunny morning or the shady evening, she would look out over the wide plains, with their bright flowers and their waving fields of grain and their green pastures where the sheep and cattle and camels fed, and she would wonder what would become of her. For she and her father and mother and brother were worshipers of the true God, but most of the people of Haran were forgetting God. And Rebekah thought that if she should grow up and marry one of the men of Haran who did not love God, and they should forget to pray, and become selfish and crafty and cruel, what a terrible thing that would be for them and their children! So she resolved in her heart that she would be true to God, and that she would marry only a man who loved God with all his heart.

And so Rebekah grew into a tall slip of a girl, and she was very beautiful, and her heart was very kind, and she loved to help everybody; for that is the way with people who truly love God. And everybody loved her, because she was beautiful and kind and true. But still she resolved that she would marry only one who loved God with all his heart and who

did good to his fellow men. And she prayed that God would bring to her such a husband. And I suppose that many a time, as Rebekah stood at the well in the twilight, gazing out over the plain into the golden west, in her fancy she saw come riding along his way the strong and handsome and gallant and good young prince who was to make her his wife.

And so what do you suppose happened? One evening, as Rebekah went out to the well and drew up her pitcher of water, she saw standing there near the well a stranger who had just come in from the west, with ten camels and several servants. But he wasn't a young man, and handsome; he was an old man, and bent and wrinkled, and dusty and worn. Still, because he looked thirsty and tired, Rebekah's heart went out to him, and she smiled in her beautiful way.

Then the old man came up to her, and said, "Let me, I pray you, drink a little water out of your pitcher."

And Rebekah said, "Drink, my lord." And she let down her pitcher upon her hand and gave him a drink. And when he had done drinking, Rebekah said, "I will draw water for your camels too." And she emptied the rest of the water into the trough, and went back and drew water again and again from the well, till all his ten camels had drunk their fill. And you know camels can drink a great deal.

The old man stood and watched her without saying a word, while she drew all that water for his camels. But when she had finished, he took a golden earring and two golden bracelets from his pocket

and gave them to her. And the old man said, "Whose daughter are you?"

And she said, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor."

Then the old man smiled, and he said, "Is there room in your father's house for us to stay overnight?"

And Rebekah said, "Oh, yes! We have room for you and your servants who are with you. And we have straw and feed for your camels too."

Then the old man bowed his head and prayed, saying, "Blessed be the God of my master Abraham, who has brought me to the house of my master's brethren."

And when Rebekah heard that, she turned and ran home, and told them about the old man at the well, and what she had done, and what he had given her, and what he had said.

Then her brother Laban ran out to the well, and found the old man still standing there, with his ten camels and his servants. And Laban cried, "Come in, most blessed of the Lord. Why do you wait outside? I have the house ready for you, and the stable for the camels."

So he called in the old man and his servants, and gave straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash the men's dusty, tired feet; and he had supper brought in before them.

But the old man said, "I will not eat till I have told my errand."

And Laban and Bethuel said to him, "Tell us what it is."

Then the old man said, "I am the servant of Abraham, who is the brother of Nahor the father of Bethuel and the grandfather of Laban. But Abraham, as you know, went west many years ago, into the good land of Canaan, where the Lord sent him. And God has made my master great, with many riches of flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and menservants and maidservants, and camels and asses. And God has given to Abraham my master, and to Sarah his wife, one son, whose name is Isaac, and to him Abraham has given all he has.

"But," went on the old man, "my master's son has not married, and my master said to me, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from among these Canaanites who love not God. But you shall go back to Haran, to my father's people, and among them you shall find a young woman as wife for my son.'

"So I took ten of my master's camels, and some of his servants, and I journeyed even here. But I knew not how to find the maiden that should be the wife of my master's son, Isaac. So when I was come to the city and the well thereof, I prayed to my master's God, and I said, 'Let the maiden of whom I ask a drink, and who shall say to me, "Drink, and I will give drink to your camels also," let her be the maiden who shall be my master's son's wife.'

"And before I had done speaking," said the old man, "there came to the well your beautiful daughter, even Rebekah. And I asked her for a drink, and she said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So then I knew that God had heard and answered my prayer. And now if you will deal kindly

with me, let Rebekah go with me to be the wife of my master's son, Isaac."

And they said, "God has given you an answer; we can say nothing against it."

And they said to Rebekah, "Will you go to be the wife of Isaac, who, like his father Abraham, worships and loves the true God?"

Then Rebekah lifted up her beautiful face, with the shining of love upon it, and she said, "I will go."

And the next morning, Rebekah, with her nurse Deborah, said good-by to her father and her mother and her brother, and was lifted up on the camel, and away they went to the west to meet Isaac.

So after they had gone many days, they came to the land of Canaan. Now Isaac, in the evening, at the time that Rebekah used to go to the well, went out into the field to meditate. And as he walked, he lifted up his eyes, and behold, the camels were coming.

And Rebekah saw him walking in the field, and she said to the old servant, "What man is this who walks in the field to meet us?"

And the old man said, "It is my master; it is Isaac."

Then Rebekah lighted down from the camel, and Isaac came forward to meet her. And he kissed her, and brought her into his mother's tent, and she became his wife. And they loved each other very much, and they loved God and their fellow men, and so, as you may believe, they were very, very happy.



Joseph dreamed that he stood out under the sky, and the sun
and the moon and the eleven stars bowed to him.

The Boy Whose Dreams Came True

A LONG, long time ago there lived a boy named Joseph. He had ten half brothers, and he had one own brother, and he had a father; but he had no mother, for his mother* was dead.

And now that he had no mother, his father loved him very much, but his half brothers hated him. His father made him a beautiful coat of many colors, such as none of his brothers had; and so they hated him all the more.

And his father used to tell him stories, wonderful stories; for his father was a wonderful man, who had dreamed dreams, and seen angels, and talked with God. And little Joseph used to wish he could dream dreams, just as his father had.

And so one night, he did. He dreamed that he was out in the harvest fields, binding wheat with his brothers, and his sheaf stood right up in the middle, and all his brothers' sheaves came around and bowed down to his sheaf. And that meant that his brothers should bow down to him. Then he went and told his dream to his brothers. But they scowled at him, and they said, "Do you think you will rule over us?" And they hated him all the more.

Then another night he dreamed another dream. He dreamed that he stood out under the sky, and the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed to him. And that meant that his brothers, and their mother, and their father should all bow down to him. Then

he went and told this dream to his brothers. But they scowled at him, and they shook their fists at him, and they said, "Do you think that we and our mother and your father will come and bow down to you?" And they hated him yet more and more.

Then one day, the ten half brothers all went far away to Shechem, with their sheep; and they were gone for many, many days. So their father sent Joseph to find them. And he walked and he walked and he walked all day, till he came to Shechem. But he didn't find them there. Then a man told him they were at Dothan. And he walked and he walked and he walked till he came to Dothan; and there he saw them.

And they saw him. They saw him coming, all tired out and hungry; but they didn't pity him a bit, for they hated him. And they said: "Here comes this dreamer. Let's kill him, and tell our father that some beast killed him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

So they caught him, and they scowled at him, and they struck him, and they pulled off his beautiful coat of many colors, and they threw him down into a deep hole, and left him there to die.

But pretty soon they saw some merchants coming; and they pulled Joseph up out of the hole, and sold him to the merchants for a slave. Poor Joseph begged them not to sell him; but they would not hear, for they hated him.

The merchants took Joseph away off into Egypt, and there they sold him for a slave. But he grew to be a great man in Egypt, till he was next to the

king. And one day, when there was a famine over all the land, his ten brothers came down to Egypt to buy corn. And they came to Joseph, who was ruler over all the land. But they didn't know it was Joseph, for he had grown to be a man; and, besides, they thought Joseph must be dead.

So they came and bowed down to him, just as his dreams had said they would. He was good to them. He didn't tell them he was Joseph, but he gave them corn, and he sent back their money with them. He said they must bring their youngest brother with them the next time they came.

So the next time they came, they brought his brother. And when they started to go home this time, Joseph put his silver cup in his brother's sack, and then he sent a man after them to catch them and bring them back, as though they had stolen his cup. And he said that the one in whose sack the cup was found should be his slave.

He said this to try them; for he wanted to know if they hated his brother as they had hated him, and if they would let that brother be a slave too. Then they all came and fell down before him again, and one of them, whose name was Judah, begged him to let their brother go, for he said it would kill their father to lose this son too. And Judah said he would stay in his place, and be a slave.

Then Joseph knew that they were no more so cruel as they had been to him. And he ordered all the rest of the people to go out of the room. Then he burst out crying, and said to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Does my father yet live?"

Then they were so frightened they didn't know what to say. But Joseph said: "Don't be afraid. I'll not hurt you. I will help you." And he came and kissed his own brother, and then he kissed them all; for he had forgiven them.

And Joseph told them to go and get his father, and bring him down to Egypt, and to get all their families, and he would care for them while the famine lasted. So they went and got their father and all their families, and came down to Egypt. And they all bowed down before Joseph; and so his dreams came true.

But Joseph bowed down before his father, and he kissed him, and he took them all, and he gave them houses, and he gave them pastures, and he gave them fields, all in the best part of the land. So he took care of them, and they were happy all their lives.



A princess finds a baby in the basket her maid has drawn out of the water. The next story will tell you who the baby was.

The Little Slave Boy Who Became a Prince

 HERE stands a little cabin by the dark river. Do you see it? Just a little clay cabin almost any rain would wash away—but here in the land of Egypt it never rains. Dark it is, oh, dark! But away in the east, the light is beginning to glimmer. The morning is near.

Hark! From the little cabin faintly comes a baby's cry. It is very low and very short, as though a mother hushed it quickly. Watch! The little door opens slowly, and a woman comes out. Then a girl comes out. And they shut the door. The girl is bareheaded and barefooted. And the woman is barefooted; but over her head she wears a shawl, and she wraps it close around her and around something she is carrying.

Down the path they go toward the river. And they walk along so still, so still. Never a word they say. They come to the river, and turn and walk down the bank a way, until they come to where the rushes grow, and there they stop and look around. It is growing lighter and lighter; the morning is coming fast. But no one is in sight.

And now the woman unwraps the shawl and brings out her burden. What do you think it is? A little boat with a cover, just about so-o-o long, made of rushes twisted together and covered with pitch. And what do you think is in the little boat? The woman lifts the cover and looks within, and the girl

looks, and they see (as they think, for the last time) a little rosy baby, fast asleep. And the mother stoops down to kiss him; but she stops, for she is afraid she might wake him. She shuts down the cover, and she looks up to heaven for just a moment to pray. Then she takes the little boat, and down to the river's brink she goes, and she pushes it out among the bushes that stand so proudly waving there.

"Miriam," she says to the little girl, "stay here and watch what becomes of the baby." And away the mother speeds to get to her home before anyone shall see her.

What has she done? Has she thrown away her baby? Oh, let me tell you. She was a poor Hebrew slave woman. Her husband, the baby's father, had to work hard every day in making brick for the cruel Egyptians, and often she herself was made to work. And worse than that, Pharaoh, the king, had said that every baby boy of the Hebrews, when any one of his people should find it, should be thrown into the river and drowned.

And this mother had kept her baby boy hidden three months. But then he was so large she could not keep him hidden any longer; and so she prayed God to keep him, and she put him in this little basket boat and left him to God's care there on the river.

And there he drifts out in the rushes, fast asleep, while his sister Miriam watches. And the morning comes on, and the light spreads over the sky. Then, just as the sun begins to lift his round, red face above the earth, down to the river comes—who do



Miriam guarding her baby brother

you think?—the daughter of Pharaoh the king, and all her maids with her. She is coming to bathe in the river and worship there; for she and all the Egyptians worship the river and the sun. So along she walks by the river's side, and she comes to where the little boat is drifting, drifting, drifting in the rushes.

"Go," she says to one of her maids, "and fetch me that little boat." And the maid plunges into the water and gets to the little boat, and draws it to the river's edge. Then the daughter of Pharaoh stoops down and lifts the cover and looks in. And the baby opens his eyes; but it is not his mother he sees, and the poor little baby cries.

"Oh, you poor little baby!" says the king's daughter. "This is one of the Hebrew children."

Then up comes Miriam, and says, "Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?"

"Run!" says the king's daughter. And Miriam runs, runs to her home, and brings the baby's own mother back.

And Pharaoh's daughter says to her, "Take this baby and nurse it for me, and I will pay you wages." Oh, what a glad mother! How she thanks God as she takes her baby home, where none shall make her afraid any more!

But now the baby was claimed by the daughter of Pharaoh as her own. Though he was a Hebrew slave baby, she said he should become a prince, and should finally be the king of Egypt. She let the mother keep him for many a year. And all that time, his mother taught him to love God and to do right, no matter how hard it was.

Then when he was twelve years old, the daughter of Pharaoh, who had often come to see him, sent for him and took him away. And she called his name Moses, which means, "drawn out," because he was drawn out of the water. And she put him in the schools of the priests, who worshiped false gods. And they taught him many, many things, and he became very wise. But they could not make him forget the true God; because his good mother, the slave woman, had taught him when he was a boy.

He lived in the great, beautiful palaces of Pharaoh, and in the grand, wonderful temples; he was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was very noble looking, and he was very wise and skillful; and all the people loved him. They loved to see him in his great golden chariot, as he led the soldiers out to battle; and they loved to see him in his pure white robes, as he walked with the priests in the temple; and they loved to see him stand by the throne, with the golden ball and the ivory rod in his hand, as the people came for justice. "How wonderful," they whispered, "that a little slave boy should become so noble a prince!" But they never said it out loud, for they thought he would not like to hear it said he had been the baby of a slave.

But there came a day when Moses went out to see how his people, the Hebrews, were getting along. For he loved them, and he was not ashamed to be one of them; because they were God's people, and they were his people. Though he was so great a prince, he never forgot that he belonged to the slave people.

And he found an Egyptian striking a Hebrew. Then he was angry, and he killed the Egyptian, and started to set his people free. But when Pharaoh heard of it, he was filled with rage, and would have killed him. So Moses fled away. He would not be a prince if he could not help his people, the slaves. And he was out in the mountain country for many, many years; but at last God brought him back to Egypt and set him to work to deliver his people. With many wonderful works, God made Moses great again in the eyes of the Egyptians, greater far than when he was a prince. And he took the Hebrews, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, and brought them to the Promised Land.

So this is the story of the little slave boy who became a prince of Egypt, and then a prince with God.

The Girl Who Chose God

N THE days when the judges ruled in Israel, there was a family living in Bethlehem, Elimelech the father, Naomi the mother, and Mahlon and Chilion the two little boys. And one year there was a famine in that land, because for a long time there had been no rain and so they could not grow any food.

So Elimelech took his two little boys, Mahlon and Chilion, with their mother Naomi, and went away from Bethlehem into the land of Moab, where they could find something to eat. And there they settled down and lived among the people of Moab.

And there lived also in that place two little Moabite girls, named Orpah and Ruth. After a while they came to know Elimelech's family; and Naomi, who had no little girls, grew to love them very much, almost as much as she loved her own boys, Mahlon and Chilion.

And as Naomi taught her own children of the true God, who made heaven and earth, and who loved His children and cared for them even as a father loves and cares for his children, why, even so she taught the two little Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. And these little girls listened wonderingly to her strange and beautiful stories; for you see little Moabite children did not know anything about them. Though the Moabites were cousins to the Israelites, they had left the knowledge of the true God, and worshiped false gods, and they thought and did many foolish and wicked things.



Ruth clung to Naomi, and said she would stay with her always.

So after a while these children grew up, and when they were grown to be young men and young women, they were married. Chilion took Orpah for his wife, and Mahlon took Ruth.

But oh, sad to tell, scarcely were they married when sorrow and trouble came. For Elimelech the father first died, and after him Mahlon and Chilion; and Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. What should they do? for they had no one to care for them.

Then Naomi determined to return to the land of Israel and to the town of Bethlehem, where she and her family had lived; for she had heard that there was plenty to eat there now.

And her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, started to go with her. But she kissed them both and told them good-by. "For," she said, "I have no one to take care of you; but here in your own land you will find other husbands, and so be happy."

So then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and turned to go back to her home, and to her people, and to her gods.

But Ruth clung to Naomi, and said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

When Naomi saw that she would not go back to her old gods and to her own people, but that she had

chosen the true God, and His people Israel, and herself as her mother, then Naomi let her go with her.

So they two went on until they came to Bethlehem. It was in the time of barley harvest, and all the fields were yellow with ripened grain, and all the people were busy reaping it. And when they had come into the city, all Naomi's friends came about her, welcoming her after her long absence. And she told them about how her husband had died, and how her sons had died, and how Ruth, her dear daughter-in-law, had given up the gods and the people of Moab for her and for the people and the God of Israel. And they welcomed Ruth, and told her to be happy among them.

But still Ruth and Naomi had no one to care for them; and how should they live? Well, Ruth said to herself that she would earn a living for herself and her mother too. Now it was a law in Israel that all the poor people of the land, when the harvest was on, could go out behind the reapers and pick up all the stalks of grain the reapers might leave behind, and have it for their own. They called this gleaning.

So the next day Ruth said to her mother, "Let me go out to the fields and glean." And Naomi said, "Go, my daughter."

Then Ruth went out, and she came to a field belonging to a man named Boaz, who was a kinsman of Elimelech, and there she started to glean.

After a while Boaz came out from the city, and he saw her. And he said to the head reaper, "Who is this girl?" And his head reaper said, "It is the Moabite maiden who came with Naomi."

Now Boaz, like every one else, had heard what Ruth had done, and so he spoke to her kindly, and said, "Stay in my fields, and glean all the time. And when you are thirsty, go drink from the water pitchers that the young men have filled. And when it is dinner time, come eat with my reapers."

And she bowed low before him, and said, "Why are you so good to me?"

And Boaz said, "Because I have heard how you have done in leaving your own land and your own father and mother, and the gods of the Moabites, to come with your mother-in-law, Naomi, and to serve the God of Israel, though it is in a land and with a people you have not known. Now may there rest upon you the blessing of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to trust."

So Ruth stayed in Boaz' fields to glean, and the reapers dropped extra handfuls for her; for Boaz had told them to do so. And at dinner time she sat with the reapers, and Boaz handed her parched corn and bread and sirup, and so she had a good dinner.

And when the evening came, and she threshed out the grain she had gleaned, she had about three pecks, more than any other of the gleaners. She took it home to Naomi, and Naomi said, "Why, Ruth, how did you get so much? Where did you glean to-day?"

And Ruth said, "In the field of Boaz; and he said to me, 'Stay in my fields, and glean all during the harvest.'"

Then Naomi said, "He is a good man, and near of kin to us. Do as he says, and stay with his

maidens and glean there until the harvest is over.”

And so she did, through all the barley harvest, and then through all the wheat harvest. And Boaz learned to love Ruth, and she loved him; and so when the harvest was ended, they were married. And there was born to Ruth and Boaz a son, who became the grandfather of David the king.

And Naomi was very happy because of her little grandchild, this baby of Ruth's. But most of all she was thankful, as all the people were thankful, for this Moabite maiden, Ruth, who had chosen the true God.



Samuel ran in to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

A Little Boy Who Listened

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy named Samuel. He lived with the good priest, Eli, in the house of God. He had work to do every morning, and every night, and all day long. In the morning he would open the doors of the house, and sweep out the rooms, and put everything in place. And at night he closed the doors, and trimmed the lamps, and put everything in place again, before he lay down to sleep. And he used to run errands for Eli, and bring wood and water, just as little boys do nowadays. And Eli taught him to read, and he taught him to pray to the great Jehovah God in heaven.

And Jehovah looked down upon the little boy Samuel, morning and night, and all day long; and He saw how faithful he was to bring the wood and the water, and to open the doors on time, and to sweep, and to trim the lamps, and everything. And He said, "I love the little boy Samuel, he is so faithful and good. I will give him something greater to do. And I will go and talk with him Myself, and tell him about it."

So one night, after Samuel had done his work, and had lain down on his little bed to sleep, he heard somebody calling him, "Samuel." And he thought it was Eli calling him. So up he jumped and ran in where Eli was lying on his bed. And he said, "Here I am, for you called me."

"No, little Samuel," Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go lie down again."

So Samuel went and lay down again. But he hadn't yet taken the littlest nap, nor shut his eyes to go to sleep, when again he heard some one calling him, "*Sam-uel*." And up he jumped and ran in to Eli. "Here I am," he said, "for you called me."

"No, little Samuel," Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down again.

But before ever he had taken the littlest nap, or shut his eyes to go to sleep, again he heard some one calling him, "*Sam-uel*." And though he was sleepy and tired, he didn't say, "Well, Eli doesn't want me; I'm going to sleep." No; but up he jumped just as quickly as before, and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you *did* call me."

Then Eli knew that it was the Lord God who was calling the child. And he said gently, "Little Samuel, go and lie down. And if He calls you again, say, 'Speak, Jehovah, for I hear You.'"

And, "Oh!" the little boy thought, "the great Jehovah God is going to talk to little Samuel." And you just believe he didn't take the littlest nap, nor shut his eyes to go to sleep. But he lay there with his eyes wide open, and his ears listening, all ready to answer just as soon as the Lord should call him.

And sure enough, just as before, the Lord came and stood, and softly called, "Samuel, Samuel."

Then Samuel said, in the tiniest voice, "Speak, for I hear You." And then the Lord talked to little Samuel, and told him what he should say to the people.



The stone struck the giant in the forehead, and he fell.

The Shepherd Boy Who Slew the Giant

N THE days when there were giants, there lived in the land of Israel a shepherd boy named David. He was the youngest of seven brothers. The others had grown up and gone to the wars; but David was left in the wilderness to keep the sheep.

David had a sling that he could sling stones with; and when the wolves and bears came to carry off his sheep, he drove them away with his sling. But one day there came a lion, a big yellow lion; and he picked up a lamb in his mouth, and ran away with it. And David ran after him, and he caught the lion, and he killed him; and he took the poor little lamb back to its mother.

And then there came a bear, a big black bear; and he took up a little lamb in his mouth, and ran off with it. And David ran after him, and he caught him. And when the bear stood up on his hind feet to fight, David caught hold of him, and killed him; and he took that poor little lamb back to its mother.

One day, he was out all alone with his sheep, when a man came running to him from his father's house, and said, "Your father wants you." So he left the man with his sheep, and went to his father. And his father said: "David, here are ten loaves of bread and a bushel of parched corn that I want you to take to your brothers in the army. And here are ten cheeses for you to give to their captain." So

David loaded the bread and the corn and the cheeses on a donkey, and took a man along to help him, and so he came to the army.

Now there was a giant there to fight the Israelites; and he was down in the valley, shouting: "Give me a man to fight with me! I'm a Philistine, and you are Israelites. If he kills me, all the Philistines will be your servants; but if I kill him, all the Israelites shall be our servants. If you are not afraid, give me one of your men to fight with me!"

But no one would go to fight with him; for he was ten feet tall, and he had a great brazen shield and a brazen helmet and a brazen coat of mail, and brazen armor for his legs; and he had a spear whose head weighed twenty-five pounds, and a sword that another man could hardly lift. So every one was afraid of him.

But when David heard his voice, and saw that everybody was afraid of him, he said: "I will go and fight this giant; and the God who helped me kill the lion and the bear will help me kill this giant."

So he started down into the valley. He had no helmet, and he had no shield, and he had no sword; but he went down with just his shepherd's staff and his sling. Now when he got down to the bottom of the valley, he stopped at the brook, and picked up five smooth stones, and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then he climbed up the bank, and went to meet the giant.

But when the giant saw him coming, and saw how little he was, and saw that he had no helmet nor shield nor sword, but only a staff and a sling, he was

very angry. And he shouted: "Am I a dog, that you come to drive me away with a stick? Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

But David wasn't afraid of him. He shouted back at him, so everybody could hear: "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield; but I come to you in the name of Jehovah of hosts, whom you have defied. And He will give you into my hand, that all the world may know there is a God in Israel."

Then he ran forward to meet the giant, and the giant strode forward to meet David. A man came before him, bearing his shield; and the giant got ready his spear and his sword, and he pushed back his helmet on his head, and cursed David by all his gods.

But David stopped, and he took a stone out of his shepherd's bag, and put it in his sling. Then he swung it around his head, and slung it at the giant. And the stone whizzed straight toward the giant, and struck him right in the forehead, from which he had pushed back his helmet. And the stone sank in, and the giant fell. Then the man that bore his shield turned and ran, and David ran forward and stood on the giant, and took up the giant's own sword and cut off his head.

Then how the Israelites shouted! And they all ran forward, and the Philistines ran away, and the Israelites chased them.

So this is how the shepherd boy who trusted in God slew the great giant who despised God.

The Little Girl Who Loved Everybody

 HERE was a little girl in the land of Israel who was very happy in her home, with her father and her mother and her brothers and sisters. She was a loving little girl, whose happiness was to make others happy. And instead of thinking of herself and her troubles, she thought of other people and their sorrows, and always she tried to help them.

Now a very great trouble came upon this little girl. For one day there swept through the land a band of soldiers from the kingdom of Syria, and they took the little girl away from her happy home and carried her captive to the city of Damascus. And there they gave her to the wife of Naaman the captain of the host of Syria. And she had to wait on this great lady, and run errands for her, and do all sorts of work.

You would think that all this was enough to make that little girl sad; to be torn away from her home and made a little slave girl in a foreign land, with nobody to worship the true God with her; for they all worshiped idols. And I shouldn't wonder at all if she was sad. But she had learned to be so unselfish and so helpful to others that even this could not keep her from loving everybody about her, even those who had stolen her from her home.

It happened one day, as she was waiting on her mistress, that all the ladies there began telling



Naaman stepped down out of his chariot, and went down the bank and into the water.

Naaman's wife how happy she should be because her husband was so great a man in the kingdom. But the poor lady sighed, and said, "All this is nothing, so long as my husband is a leper."

Now you know that to be a leper was a very terrible thing; for leprosy was a disease which no one could cure, and the poor man or woman who had it had to suffer a great deal, and to die a most terrible death.

So when this little captive maid heard her mistress say that, and saw her weep, she was sorry for her. And she said, "I wish that my lord Naaman were with the prophet in Israel, and he would make him well of the leprosy."

They were all astonished at that, and they asked her, "Could your prophet cure anyone of the leprosy?"

And she said, "Why, Elisha the prophet is able to do anything. Once he even raised a boy from the dead."

So then they went and told the king of Syria. And the king of Syria said, "I will send Naaman down to the land of Israel, and have him cured of the leprosy."

So, one day soon, the little maid saw a great company gathered in the court of Naaman's house, ready to start for the land of Israel. There was Naaman in his chariot, with a great many horsemen around him, and mules laden with gold, and silver, and fine clothing, which they were taking as a present to the man who should cure Naaman of the leprosy.

And then they started off down the road. Don't you suppose the little girl longed in her heart to go with them back to her own land and home? But she was a captive, and must stay where she was. But I have no doubt that as she watched them out of sight, her loving little heart forgot all about herself, and prayed that God would guide Naaman to the prophet, and not only cure him of the leprosy, but cure him of his sin and bring him to worship the true God.

So at last Naaman and his men came to the house of Elisha the prophet. And he sent up word, "Naaman the captain of the host of Syria is come to be cured of the leprosy." He was so proud that he thought Elisha would come hurrying to heal him.

But Elisha did not even come out to see him. He sent a messenger to tell him, "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and you shall be clean of the leprosy."

When Naaman heard that, he was very angry. "I thought," he said, "that he would come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and strike his hand over the place, and make the leper well. Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" And he turned and went away in a rage.

Then his servants came near to him and said softly, "My father, if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, when he tells you to do this little thing, 'Wash, and be clean'!"

Then Naaman was ashamed of himself, and he turned and drove down to the river Jordan. And he stepped down out of his chariot, and went down the bank and into the water. And he dipped down once, but the leprosy was still there. And he dipped down the second time, but still the leprosy was there. And he dipped down the third time, and the fourth time, and the fifth time, and the sixth time, but still the leprosy remained. Then he dipped down the seventh time, and when he came up, behold, the leprosy was gone, and his flesh was clean and healthy.

Then he was glad. And he drove back with all his men to the house of Elisha, and he said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel, for none but He can cure so wonderfully. And now," he said to the prophet, "I will give you a present of gold and silver and fine raiment."

But Elisha said, "No; I will receive nothing."

Then said Naaman, "I pray you, then, to let me have two mules' burden of earth, that when I come to Damascus, I may build an altar upon it to the true God, the God of Israel. For I will henceforth worship no other."

And Elisha gave him the earth, and he went on his way back to his home, cured both of the leprosy and of his proud, sinful heart. And thereafter that little captive maid, whose unselfish love had opened the way for Naaman's healing, had somebody with her to worship the true God.

The Little Boy Who Was Hid in the Temple

OH, WHAT a terrible time! Men running and shouting, and crying and hiding, and falling down dead! And women weeping and wringing their hands, and begging to live!

The baby Joash waked from his nap at all the horrible noise, and sitting up in his bed, he cried for his nurse. Just one year old he was, this littlest son of the dead king of Judah, and here he was all alone—and such a horrible noise! What could be the matter?

Then he saw some of his sisters. They rushed to the door of his room, and they knocked it open, and they ran in crying. Then his brothers came running in, and after them were men with swords. And the men caught little Joash's brothers there, and killed them.

But little Joash's nurse ran in, and she picked up the little Joash in her arms, and they were knocked down, and they fell among the brothers, the king's sons that were slain. And his nurse kept very still, and little Joash kept very still, and the wicked men went away.

Oh, who had done this terrible thing? It was his wicked, wicked old grandmother, Athaliah. For she hated God, and she hated all the king's children, and so she sent the soldiers to kill them.

Little Joash lay there, and his nurse. And pretty soon came stepping, stepping softly in, Jehosheba, little Joash's aunt. She looked at this one, and she

looked at that one, of the poor dead princes, and she cried; for she loved them. And then she came to little Joash and his nurse, lying there so still. And she touched him, and he stirred. And she gave a soft little cry of joy, for she found he was alive.

Then she took him up, and his nurse, and she took them with her, and hid them in a room in the great beautiful temple of God. For she was the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada, who ruled there in the temple, and so she could hide them there. But she and Jehoiada did not tell the wicked Athaliah that they had the little Joash hidden there, and they did not tell the captains, and they did not tell anybody.

So the baby Joash grew up, away back there in that secret room in the temple. He was one year old when he went there. And he grew to be two years old, and could walk. And he grew to be three years old, and could talk. And he grew to be four years old, and could read. And he grew to be five years old, and was learning everything. For the good priest Jehoiada taught him to love God, and to know God's commandments by heart. And his good aunt Jehosh-eba told him that he was the king's son, and that he should yet come to be king, and that he must learn all he could, so as to be a good and great king.

And so he came to be *six* years old, and *seven* years old. And all this time, his wicked old grandmother Athaliah was reigning over the land. But the people hated her. So Jehoiada called the Levites together, and the captains of the soldiers, and he told them the little prince Joash was alive and staying there in the temple. Then he brought them into the

room where Joash stood waiting to see them. And they were glad.

So then Jehoiada said, "Now you must get all your men together, and come up here to the temple with your swords and with your shields, and stand around the little prince Joash, and we will make him king." And they did so. They came up with their swords and with their shields, a great, great many soldiers. And the Levites came out with trumpets, a great, great many trumpets, and they blew their trumpets until the temple rang.

And inside, in the little room, stood Joash with his good aunt Jehosheba. And she kissed him, and she cried over him, and she laughed over him. And she said, "See that you be a good king, my little boy Joash, and that you love the God whom the wicked Athaliah hates."

Then, while the trumpets blew and blew, out walked Joash with the high priest Jehoiada, and came and stood by a pillar in the court of the temple. And all the people saw him, and they shouted until they cried. And the trumpets rang and rang again. And the soldiers stood on the right side, and they stood on the left side, and they stood in front, so that none could get to the little prince Joash.

Then all was still, while Jehoiada put the crown on his head, and gave him the book of God's law, and poured the sweet holy oil upon his head, and made him king. And all the people shouted again, and sang, and cried, "Long live the king!"

Now that wicked old grandmother Athaliah heard the noise of the people shouting, and she came into

the temple court. And she heard the people shouting, "Long live the king!" and she saw the soldiers on the right side and on the left side and in front; and there by the pillar she saw the king, the little boy she thought she had killed. And she caught hold of her dress and tore it, and she cried, "Treason! Treason!"

But Jehoiada lifted his hand, and he said, "Take her out between the ranks, and if anybody follows her, let him be slain with the sword!" So the soldiers caught hold of her and took her out, because they would not kill her in the temple. But when they came to the gate of the king's house, there they smote her, and she died.

And they brought the little king Joash out from the temple, where he had so long been hidden; and they took him to the king's house, and there he sat upon the king's throne, and he promised that he would keep the law of God and be good to all the people. Then again the people shouted, "Long, long live the king!"

The Orphan Girl Who Saved Her People

IN THE days of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, there lived a little Jewish girl named Esther. Esther's father and mother were dead; but though she was a little orphan girl, she had a good cousin named Mordecai, who was much older than she, and who adopted her as his own daughter.

So Esther lived with Mordecai, and was very happy there; for she was an obedient little girl, and did everything that Mordecai told her to do, even though she might not always know why. And she always found that when she did what he told her to do it came out all right.

Esther grew up very fair and beautiful, and she was very unselfish and kind as well. She never asked for more than her share of anything, and was always ready to help others rather than to ask help for herself. And that made every one love her, of course.

So one day, when Esther had become a young lady, King Ahasuerus, who had put away his queen, named Vashti, sent through all the land for all the beautiful maidens that could be found, to see which one of them he should make queen in the place of Vashti.

And his messengers found Esther among the rest, and brought her up to the palace. And when King Ahasuerus had seen Esther, he loved her more than all the others, and he made her queen. So this little Jewish orphan girl had now become the queen



The orphan girl, Esther, is chosen to be queen.

of Persia. But that was not the greatest thing she was to do, as you shall see.

When the king made Esther his queen, he also made Mordecai, her cousin, one of his councilors, and Mordecai sat among the great men in the gate of the king's palace. And in those days it happened that Mordecai learned that two of the king's servants planned to kill the king; and Mordecai told Esther, and Esther told the king. So his life was saved. And it was written in the record books that Mordecai had saved the king's life.

There was also another man among the king's councilors, named Haman, who hated the Jews. But he did not know that Queen Esther was a Jew; for Mordecai had told her not to tell anyone, and she had done as he said. This Haman became a great man with the king, who set him above all the councilors and princes, and commanded that every one should worship him.

But Mordecai would not bow down and worship him; wherefore Haman hated Mordecai. And when he had thought the matter over, he determined that he would not only kill Mordecai, but all his people, the Jews, as well. So he came before the king, and told him that the Jews were a wicked people, who did not obey the king, and that they all ought to be killed.

So the king took off his signet ring, with which he signed his letters, and gave it to Haman and told him to do as he pleased. Then Haman wrote letters in the king's name, and signed them with his ring, and sent them over all the kingdom of Persia, saying

that on a certain day all the Jews in the kingdom should be killed, and whatever property they had should be taken by those who killed them.

Now when this proclamation was made in the city, Mordecai mourned very greatly, and put on sackcloth and ashes. And all the Jews in the city also mourned; for the king's commandment was that they should be destroyed.

Then it was told Esther how her cousin mourned, and she sent out a man to inquire what was the matter. And Mordecai sent back word to her that the king had commanded all the Jews to be killed; and he told her that she must go in before the king and get him to change his mind.

Now it was a law of the kingdom that no one, not even the queen, might come before the king unless the king sent for him. And if anyone should come unbidden, he was to be killed, unless the king should hold out his golden scepter to him.

Then Esther sent word to Mordecai that he and all the Jews should fast and pray for her, and she and her maidens would fast and pray; then she would go in before the king without being called, even though she should die for it.

So Mordecai and all the Jews fasted and prayed. And Esther put on all her royal apparel, and came and stood before the king. And when the king saw her, he was glad, and he held out his scepter to her, and asked her what request she had to make of him.

And Esther said, "I desire only this, that the king and Haman come to-day to the banquet I have prepared for them."



The king said, "Hang Haman on his own gallows."

So the king said he would come, and he would bring Haman. And when he told Haman, Haman was greatly delighted, because he alone with the king was called to the banquet of Queen Esther.

So they came to her banquet, and had a merry time. And when it was over, the king asked Esther again what request she had to make of him. And she said that she wished the king and Haman to come to another banquet she should prepare to-morrow; and then she would tell the king what she desired.

So they said they would come, and Haman went away very joyful. But when he came out of the gate and met Mordecai, who would not bow down nor worship him, he was more angry than ever, and he went home and had a great gallows, fifty cubits high, made to hang Mordecai on when he should get the king's consent.

That night King Ahasuerus could not sleep, and he commanded to bring the record books to be read before him. And therein he heard how Mordecai had saved his life by revealing the plot of his servants. Then the king asked what had been done to honor Mordecai; and it was told him that nothing had been done.

So when the morning was come, Haman had arrived very early to ask the king to let him hang Mordecai on his gallows fifty cubits high. And they told the king that Haman stood outside, and the king called him in.

But before Haman could say anything, the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"

And Haman thought, "Who but myself should the king delight to honor?" So he said, "Let the king's robes be put upon him, and the king's crown be put upon his head; let him be seated on the king's horse, and let one of the king's most noble princes bring him on horseback through the city and proclaim, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

Then the king said, "That is good, and you are a most noble prince; see that Mordecai is treated as you have said. Put on him the royal robes, and put the crown on his head, seat him on the king's horse, and go yourself, leading his horse through the city, and proclaim, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

Then Haman felt very bad, but he had to do as the king said; and so he took Mordecai through the city in royal apparel, seated on the king's horse, and proclaimed to all the people, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor." Then Haman went home feeling very sick.

But soon there came a messenger to tell him it was time to come with the king to Esther's banquet. So he made ready and went.

And when the king and Haman had eaten of Esther's banquet that day, the king again asked Esther what the request was that she wanted him to grant her.

And Esther said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, give me my life and the life of my people. For we are sold, to be destroyed, and to be slain, and to perish."

Then the king was very angry, and he said, "Who is the enemy who has done this?"

And Esther pointed to Haman, and said, "The adversary and the enemy is this wicked Haman." Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

And one of the servants said, "Haman also has made a gallows fifty cubits high, whereon to hang the cousin of the queen, even Mordecai, who also saved the king's life."

Then the king said, "Hang Haman on his own gallows." And they took him out and hanged him. And the king put Mordecai in Haman's place, over all the councilors and the princes.

Then Esther prayed the king to stop the killing of the Jews which was commanded in the letters Haman had sent out in the king's name. But it was a law of the kingdom that any decree signed by the king could not be changed. So the king said to Esther and to Mordecai, "Write another letter in my name, and seal it with my ring, that on that day, when the Jews are to be killed, they shall defend themselves in the king's name."

So Mordecai hastened and sent out the letter. And on that day all the Jews gathered together in their cities, and the princes and governors of the king everywhere helped them, so that none were able to do them hurt.

So this is the story of the little orphan girl who became queen, and who saved her people from death.

The Boy King Who Overthrew the Idols

HE best king that the people of Judah ever had was named Josiah. He was only a boy when he was made king, just eight years old. His father had been a very wicked king, and his grandfather had been the wickedest of all; but little King Josiah was a good king. The people were doing very wicked things. Instead of loving God and keeping His commandments, they began to worship the sun, which they called Baal. They made images of wood and stone and silver and gold, and set them up in Jerusalem and in all the other cities. Then they made altars before them, and burned sweet incense to them, and bowed down and prayed to those dumb images. And they did all sorts of evil things, for so they believed these gods commanded them. They stole, and they lied, and they broke the Sabbath, and children hated their parents, and fathers hated their children.

And when the young king Josiah saw how badly things were going, he began to seek the true God Jehovah. And he prayed that God would give him power to change the people from their wicked ways. Then he called his men, and sent them out to break down the images in his city, Jerusalem. So they broke them down, and ground them up to powder, and Josiah scattered the dust over the graves of those who had worshiped them. And he called upon all the people to come back and worship Jehovah.



King Josiah and his soldiers and the priests of God went everywhere, breaking down altars and images.

And when he had made Jerusalem all clean, he started through all the land, with the priests of God and with his soldiers; and everywhere they went, they found the images of Baal. And they broke down the altars and destroyed the images, and called all the people back to worship the true God.

At last they came to a place called Bethel, where there was an altar and a temple to the sun. And in it was a golden calf, which Jeroboam, a great king, had made many, many years before. And here the people of Israel had long done evil. So when Josiah came there, he commanded his men to grind to powder the golden calf, and to burn all the images. And when he looked about him, in the mountains he saw the sepulchers, or graves, of men who had long been dead. And he told his men to go and gather bones from these graves. When they had done so, he burned the bones upon the altar, to defile the place; for then, he knew, people would never worship the sun there again.

As they were gathering the bones from the sepulchers, Josiah saw a monument at one of the graves. And he said, "What is that?" Then they told him this story:

"Long, long ago, when Jeroboam first built this altar and this temple, there came a prophet out of Judah, and he came here and stretched out his hand, and cried, 'O altar, altar, thus says Jehovah, There shall be a child born, Josiah by name; and upon you shall he sacrifice your wicked priests, and he shall burn men's bones upon you.'

"Then the king Jeroboam was angry at the prophet, and he stretched out his hand toward him, saying, 'Lay hold on him.' But his arm which he stretched out was withered, so that he could not draw it back again. Then he felt very humble, and he asked the prophet to pray for him. The prophet did pray for him, and his arm was healed.

"'Come home with me,' said the king then, 'and eat and drink and rest; and I will give you a reward.'

"But the prophet said: 'I will not; for Jehovah charged me, saying, "You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way you came."' And he turned and started home another way.

"But there was an old man there who once had been a prophet of Jehovah, but who had left Him. And when he heard what the prophet had done, he saddled his ass and started after him. And when he came up with him, he said, 'Come back with me; for an angel told me to ask you to come.' But he lied to him.

"Then the prophet believed him; and because he was tired and hungry, he turned around and went back with the old man. And when he was rested, he started on his way again. But he had gone only a little way when a lion met him, and slew him, because he had not obeyed God.

"Then the old man, when he heard of it, went after him, and picked him up, and brought him back to Bethel. And he made a sepulcher, and built a monument over it, and there he buried the prophet, and there he himself afterwards was buried. And that monument," said they to Josiah, "is the monu-

ment you see yonder, the monument of the prophet who called you by name so many, many years before you were born, and told what you should do to this place.”

And when Josiah heard that, he said: “Let him be. Let no man touch his bones.” And so they left him where he lay.

Then, when the good king Josiah had gone through all the cities, and had broken down all the altars of Baal, and brought the people back to worship Jehovah, he came back to Jerusalem. And there he gathered all the people from all over the land to keep the Passover. They came on foot, and they came on horseback, and they came on camels and in carriages, thousands and thousands of them, to keep the Passover. For they were very glad that they had turned again to serve the true God, and that they no longer worshiped idols of wood and stone and gold. And so great a feast did they have, and so many were the people who came, that it was said there never had been a Passover like that Passover, since the days of Samuel the seer. And all the people praised the Lord God Jehovah, because He had given them such a ruler as the good king Josiah.

The Child Prophet

N THE days of good King Josiah, there lived among the priests a little boy whose name was Jeremiah. He was a timid little fellow, with great tearful brown eyes, and sweet, gentle ways. He studied the law of God, and he loved God, and felt very sorry for the evil ways of all the people.

So one day the Lord God came to Jeremiah, as He had once long before come to the little Samuel; and He said, "Before you were born, I knew you, and made up My mind to have you for a prophet to all the people."

But the little boy Jeremiah said, "O Jehovah God, I can not prophesy, for I am only a child."

Then Jehovah God looked upon the shrinking little fellow, and He said: "Never mind if you are only a child. For everywhere I send you, you can go; and everything I tell you, you can speak. You shall not be afraid of the wicked people. For I have made you like a walled city; I have made your slender little body like an iron pillar; I have made your tender little face like a brazen wall against the men that do evil."

So the boy Jeremiah was set to be a prophet in a very wicked land. He went up to Jerusalem, the great city where the beautiful temple of God was. And as he went through the streets of the city, he found people making altars in the streets to the sun god and to the moon god and to the star gods, and worshiping them, instead of worshiping Jehovah God. They gathered at the street corners, and there



They took Jeremiah, and cast him into a deep pit in the court of the prison.

they set up images of Baal and of the queen of heaven, and put altars before them. Then the children ran about to gather wood, the fathers put it on the altars and started the fires, and the mothers and the maidens kneaded dough into cakes and baked them there, to pretend to feed the senseless idols.

Then the Spirit of God came upon the child Jeremiah, and he stood and cried: "Are you not ashamed to say to a piece of wood, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You are my mother'? How can you steal, and murder, and swear falsely, and worship all these idols, and then go up to God's great temple, and say, 'We are allowed to do all these wicked things'? Is this house, which is called by My name, saith Jehovah, become a den of robbers in your eyes?"

But most of the people would not listen to the little prophet. Then he went on, and he said to himself, "Surely I must expect these poor people to be foolish; I will go to the great men and speak to them, for they know Jehovah God."

So he came to the palaces and the great men's houses, and spoke to them. But he found that they were wicked too, and were leading the people to do these wicked things. And the little prophet was almost discouraged. "Oh," he cried, "that my head were a fountain of tears, that mine eyes might run rivers of water for the sins of my people!"

Then the Lord God came and gave him courage. "It is a wicked nation," He said, "and they will not hear you. But you shall not be afraid of them; they shall fight against you, but they shall not conquer

you. And some of them will hear, and these will I give you for your people."

Then the little prophet Jeremiah was brought to the good king Josiah. The king had looked upon the wickedness of the people too, and he had just begun to try to make them good. He set out with his soldiers, and cast down the idols, and ground them to powder; and he made the people come back to worship Jehovah. Some of them did it with all their hearts, but the most of them did it only because the king made them do it.

And after the death of good King Josiah, the people turned again to their idols. Then Jeremiah, who had grown up to be a man, preached again to the people, to turn them from their evil ways. But they hated him. They took him and cast him into a deep pit in the court of the prison. There was mire in the bottom, and Jeremiah sank down into the mire. But there was a good black man in the king's house, named Ebed-melech, who went and got ropes and let them down to Jeremiah, with old rags to put under his arms so the ropes would not cut, and then he drew Jeremiah up. But Jeremiah still had to stay in prison.

Yet he had some faithful friends. One of them was named Baruch. Baruch would write what Jeremiah spoke for the people, and then he would carry it out and read it to them. And though the most of them were wicked, and would not listen, there were some who did listen, and loved God, and did right. One of these was a boy named Daniel; and he had three friends who were like him. Their parents, too,

loved God; and in their homes there were many prayers offered for the prophet Jeremiah, who had been so faithful from his childhood in teaching the ways of God.

At last, the city was taken by the king of Babylon, and Jeremiah was set free, to go where he pleased. Daniel and his friends were carried to Babylon, where they became great in God's work. But the king of Babylon told Jeremiah he might do as he chose. If he would go to Babylon, the king would make him a great man; but he was free to go where he would. The king was carrying most of the men of Judah to Babylon, but he left a few in the land; and Jeremiah would not leave these, for he wanted to help them still to serve God. So he stayed with the few poor people there in the desolate land; and even as when he was a boy, so now when he was a man, he taught the people the ways of Jehovah God, until his death.

The Boy Who Grew Up in the Wilderness

N THE days of Herod the king, there was a father named Zacharias, and a mother named Elisabeth, and a little boy named John. John was the only child Zacharias and Elisabeth had. Like the little Jeremiah, he had been called, even before his birth, to be a prophet of God. Now in the days when John lived, there were no prophets, and there had not been any for a long, long time. And his father and mother were anxious to train him just right for a prophet.

They did not dare stay in the city with him, for fear he would learn its evil ways; so they took their little boy John and went out into the country that was called the Wilderness of Judea. There they had a house; there was land to make gardens and sow fields; there were caves for sheepfolds; there was pasture for flocks and herds. It was not a very beautiful country; for, while in places there were trees and grass, for the most part the land was broken and rocky, and in some places bare of everything but sand and rocks.

The little boy John grew up here in the wilderness, living a simple, hard-working life; for that is what it takes to keep one's body and mind in good order. On the Sabbath days and in the evenings, he went out among the trees and the rocks, and talked with God. He studied the Bible; for he knew he must do this in order to know what he was to teach



John stood by the waters of the Jordan, and cried, "The kingdom of God is at hand."

the people. For John was to be the greatest prophet that ever lived. He was to be the prophet that would tell the people of Jesus' coming as the Christ, the King, the Saviour of the world.

John's mother and father taught him how to read and write; and they taught him all they could of the blessed word of God. But this was not all they taught him. They taught him to be quick and earnest, to do everything that needed to be done, and to do it on time. They taught him that fine clothes do not make a man; and they taught him that to eat everything he wanted and whenever he wanted it, would not make a good prophet. A man and a prophet must be simple and self-denying.

So as John grew up, he lived on the simplest food, and the clothing he wore was made of coarse camel's hair, and bound about his waist with a leather belt. But he grew up sturdy and strong, with a straight, supple body and a strong mind. He could not be tempted to be weak, nor peevish, nor angry, nor cross; but though he was strong, he was forgiving; and though he was stern to himself, he was kind to others.

And the day came at last when he was to go and tell the people that Jesus was coming. So then the strong young prophet in the wilderness went forth, and stood by the waters of the Jordan, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight; for the Christ is coming, and the kingdom of God is at hand!" Then the people who were passing by stopped to hear him; and they asked him, "What shall we do?"

“Repent of your sins,” said the prophet, “be baptized, and have your hearts right to receive the Christ.” So the people went down into the water, and were baptized by John. And everywhere they went, they carried the news, “The prophet of the Christ is come out of the wilderness, and is preaching repentance and baptism beside the Jordan.”

So all the people of all the cities, and all the people from all the country, went out to hear John preach. “What shall we do?” they cried. And the prophet who had grown up in the wilderness told them what he had learned even as a boy, to leave their evil and their weakness, to be simple and to be true. “Whoever has two coats,” he said, “let him give one to him who has none. Whoever has more than he needs to eat, let him share with him who is hungry. Do not grow angry. Strike no one. Be content with what you have, and seek the kingdom of God; for the Christ is near at hand.”

Then all the people began to think, “Perhaps this John is the Christ Himself.” But he said: “No, I am not the Christ. He is coming soon. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord.’ Repent and be converted; for the Christ is coming soon.”

So many were converted, and were ready to receive Jesus when He came. And Jesus was glad to see John. He was glad he had grown so strong and true; and He said of this boy who had grown up in the wilderness, “Never was there a greater prophet.”



Jesus took her hand, and said, "Little girl, I say to thee, Arise."
What happened? The next story will tell you.

The Little Girl Who Was Raised from the Dead

NCE there was a father and a mother who had a little girl just twelve years old, whom they loved very, very much. But she fell sick one day, and she grew sicker and sicker and sicker, until her mother said to her father, "You must get a doctor."

And her father, whose name was Jairus, said, "I'll get Jesus." So Jairus started out to find Jesus; and when he found Him, Jesus was just getting out of a boat, having come across the lake with His disciples. And there were many people there to see Jesus, and to hear Him teach, and to be healed of diseases.

But Jairus pressed through the crowd to Jesus, and said to Him, "Master, my little girl is sick and almost ready to die. Will you come and heal her?"

And Jesus said, "Yes, I'll go with you." So they started to go to his home. But the people pressed so close about Jesus, talking to Him, and crowding Him, and asking to be healed, that they could not go very fast. And the father was afraid that his little girl would die before Jesus could reach her.

And so it happened. For there came one of his servants down the road, and said, "Don't trouble the Master any more. Your little girl is dead!"

Then, oh, how bad the poor father felt! But Jesus said to him, "Don't worry. Only believe, and she shall be made well."

So they went on until they came to the house. And there all the people were crying and crying, because the little girl was dead. But Jesus said to them, "Don't cry; for she is not dead, but sleeping." He said that because He knew He was going to raise her to life; and it would be just as though she had been asleep.

So He went into the house, and He put everybody out but just the mother and the father, and Peter and James and John. And they came into the room where the little girl was. There she lay on her bed, cold and still. Her eyes were shut, there was no color in her cheeks and no breath in her body; she was dead.

Then Jesus came up to her, and took her by the hand, and said, "Little girl, I say to you, Arise."

And she opened her eyes, and the color came into her cheeks, and the breath came into her body, and she smiled at them, and she was alive!

And Jesus took her up, and gave her to her father and mother, and told them to give her something to eat.

A Lad of Galilee

N THE days when John the Baptizer was yet a boy, there lived in a little town in Galilee a Lad just twelve years old. He was said to be the carpenter's son; for Joseph, whom His mother Mary had married, was the village carpenter.

And this Boy learned very early to help Joseph in the shop and in building houses and in all sorts of work. He learned, too, to help His mother in the house. But when the day's work was done, He loved to go quietly away to the fields and the woods and along the streams, where He could see the winds stirring the branches, and hear the birds singing, and watch the fishes playing in the waters.

He watched the red lilies growing up on their slender stems; and even as He looked at them, He thought, "Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." And as He saw the birds flitting from tree to tree, and heard them singing their glad songs, He thought: "These birds of the air, they do not sow, nor reap, nor store up in barns; yet My heavenly Father feeds them. Will He not much more care for all of us?" And as He drank of the clear waters flowing over the rocks in the little brooks, He thought: "The wellspring of wisdom is like a flowing stream. And with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation."

At His mother's knee, He learned to read the Scriptures; and on the Sabbath days, when He went with His mother and His half brothers to the synagogue, so good a reader was He that He was often

called on by the rabbi to read the Bible lesson for the day.

So much did He study the Bible, that He could remember and repeat it whether He had the book with Him or not; and when He went out into the woods and the fields and talked to His heavenly Father, the words of that same heavenly Father which He had learned in the Bible would come back to Him in answer. So, pure and true and lovely, grew up the Boy Jesus among the hills of Nazareth.

To one thing He looked forward with joy, and that was the day when He should be twelve years old, and Joseph and Mary would take Him with them when they went up to the feast at Jerusalem. For not until a boy was twelve years old could he go up to the feast.

And at last, that day came for the Boy Jesus. With many a shout of joy, with laughter of young men and maidens and children, with the glad commands of the leaders, the caravan of people moved off toward the south, toward the great and holy city Jerusalem.

The days were long ones of marching, but they never grew too weary for the Boy of Nazareth. And the nights were wonderful times, with the stars shining down upon the encampment, while the voices of the elders ran on in endless tales of the glorious deeds of their fathers and the great works of God. And finally, after days and days of travel, they came up over the mountains to where they could see the great city, with its beautiful temple of snowy-white walls and its blazing golden roof. Then they all



When the day's work was done, Jesus loved to wander in the fields and by the streams.

shouted for joy. They knelt down to pray; and, rising, they marched joyfully forward to the city of the feast of the great God.

The little Boy Jesus went up to the temple, and watched the priests slaying the lambs while the people confessed their sins and asked for them to be forgiven. And as He had watched the lilies grow and the birds sing and the waters run, and had found in them lessons from God, so now He found the lessons that were meant in the sacrifice of lambs and bullocks.

For the word of God He had studied came to His mind. "God will provide Himself a lamb;" He had heard it said by Abraham. "Behold, My servant," He remembered His heavenly Father had said, "is brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" and there His heavenly Father taught Him that the blood of the lamb the priest was slaying could not take away sins, but it was meant to point to the Lamb of God, the Christ who should die for His people and so take away their sins. And there, as He stood, He heard God say, "My Son, Thou art the Lamb of God." So for the first time in His life, this little Lad of Galilee came to know that He was to be the Saviour of the world.

But Joseph and Mary, as the days of the feast went on, forgot their boy. So quiet was He, and so careful, that they felt they need not watch out for Him. And when the feast was ended, and they started home, Joseph and Mary went along with all the people, without seeing Jesus. They thought He was somewhere in the company. Not until the night

came, and they missed His help, did they know He was lost.

Then they sorrowfully went back alone to Jerusalem, and searched everywhere for Him; but they could not find Him. Oh, how sad they were as they thought they might never see their beautiful, loving Boy again!

But once more they came up into the temple; and there, as they came near one of the rooms, they heard His voice. How glad they were! They entered the room, and there they saw Jesus, the little Lad, sitting in the midst of all the old, grave teachers, asking them questions and listening to their answers. The teachers thought they were teaching the Boy Jesus, but they were really learning of Him; for the wonderful things He had heard from God here at the feast, He was opening up to their minds by His questions.

As Joseph and Mary saw Him, they called Him to them; and then Mary said: "Son, why have You done this way with us? Do You know Your father and I have been seeking You sorrowfully these three days?"

But Jesus had learned that He was not the son of Joseph, but the Son of God. He had learned that He had a great work to do for His heavenly Father; and He answered gently: "How was it that you sought Me? Did you not know I must be doing the work of My Father?"

Then He went with them obediently; and on the long journey alone up to their home in Nazareth, He taught them something of the things He had



The Boy Jesus in the temple

learned at the feast. Still, in the home, and in the shop, and in the fields, He lived as the simple Boy Jesus, just a lad of Galilee, until the day that John's voice was heard, saying, "Repent and be baptized, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then Jesus left His Nazareth home, and went out to show Himself the Saviour of the world.

